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ABSTRACT

A credible system of assessment and formal documentation for Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) clients' program experiences is needed to provide disadvantaged youth and adults with a method to present skills and abilities to employers. This system could certify skills and experience of dislocated workers to prospective new employers, assist employers in making hiring decisions, and help JTPA achieve credibility in the employer community. A documentation system should be portable, allow for different certification levels, serve information needs of educators for purposes of obtaining educational credit, incorporate basic education skills and pre-employment/work maturity competencies and occupational skill attainment, and be based on valid measures of on-the-job performance requirements. Several initiatives under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act have set the stage for what is now occurring. Three strategical approaches are suggested as starting points to move toward a certification/credential mechanism in the employment and training system: build on the work now occurring within the JTPA system, devise a multifaceted assessment system with related documentation of achievement, and/or develop an employability profile for employment and training system participants. The final section suggests actions state legislators might undertake for beginning to work on the three strategical approaches. (YLB)

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ACCREDITED TRAINING FOR WORK

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and

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About this Paper

This paper was commissioned by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) under a contract with the U.S. Department of Labor. Opinions and conclusions herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect views of NCSL, the U.S. Department of Labor, or persons interviewed as resources for the paper.

FOREWORD

The problem of how to develop and award credentials to job training participants is an issue that has long evaded federal employment and training policy. This is due in part to the differences in federal and state responsibilities.

Traditionally, the assessment of education quality has been a state, and more specifically, a state legislative function. The most recent federal employment and training policy, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), recognizes this by defining academic credit to be "consistent with applicable state law and regulation and the requirements of an accredited educational agency or institution in a state." The JTPA also prohibits federal control of curriculum (Sec. 145) thus leaving that concern to state and local policymakers. States already have developed policy precedents in this area in such issues as apprenticeship programs, the GED, various state laws requiring competency-based education programs and the like. State legislatures thus have an important contribution to play in the oversight of program quality.

In recent months, many of the questions asked by state legislators have involved the many dimensions of this complex issue. For that reason, NCSL decided to commission a paper by two individuals long familiar with both education and training policy, Jacqueline Danzberger and Martin Blank. Their task was to describe the dimensions of the problem, the major approaches to solutions, and the primary issues of debate in order to begin a dialogue among state legislators and others in the employment and training system. NCSL now presents that discussion for your review and solicits your comments.

Rod Riffel
Program Manager
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ACCREDITING TRAINING FOR WORK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The governance and administrative structures of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) are in place, and the time is appropriate for looking at a continuing major challenge for the Nation's public employment and training system -- development of a credible system of assessment and formal documentation for clients' program experiences.

The public employment and training system was established out of recognition that there are significant barriers to entry into employment and to continued success in the primary labor market for economically and educationally disadvantaged youth and adults. A large percentage of persons who turn to the employment and training system do not possess traditional educational credentials and do not have a history of employment successes which can be documented. These persons confront major barriers of employer resistance to hiring unproven applicants.

More recently the employment and training system has begun to address the needs of workers dislocated by major shifts in the economy. While dislocated workers have different problems from those of the economically disadvantaged, many of them also lack traditional credentials.

During the years of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the predecessor federal legislation to JTPA, attempts were made, particularly with youth programs, to develop a useful "credential" for persons who completed programs. This goal was not reached under CETA.

The structure of JTPA affords a new opportunity. First, governance and accountability for the system now lie with the states, which have traditionally had responsibility for setting standards for credentials. Second, JTPA requires heavy involvement of private sector employers in governing the program at the local level, in setting standards for training, and in determining competencies for youth. Third, representatives of traditional education systems and institutions must also be involved in JTPA governance at the state and local levels, and coherent planning with other systems, e.g., vocational education and apprenticeship programs, must be demonstrated. Finally, by placing management responsibility for JTPA with the states and implementation with local entities, there is general congruence in governance and operational structures between the employment and training and education systems in states.

State legislators' involvement can be a critical factor for building a rational, credible system for accrediting training and educational achievement, and providing portable, long-term documentation for clients of the employment and training system. Such documentation would not only be useful to employers making entry level hiring decisions but also provide possibilities for assessment by traditional education institutions for academic credit.

Alternative systems and tools exist to assess learning outside traditional education programs for some parts of the population, but are not directed at economically and educationally disadvantaged persons. These systems and tools are fully recognized by most employers and for next steps in education and/or occupational training. The General Equivalency Diploma (GED), the External High School Diploma, Continuing Education Units, the Career Passport, the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS), and apprenticeship certificates, among others, can inform discussion and

assist in developing an accreditation system within the public employment and training system.

Surveys to date show that Private Industry Councils (PICs) under JTPA are taking seriously the mandate to develop youth competencies. However, efforts are most advanced in pre-employment/work maturity competencies. Competencies for basic education skills and occupational training are less developed. This reflects two realities. First, programs and assessment tools for pre-employment and work-maturity skills were more developed under CETA in the employment and training. Secondly, the JTPA focus on placement after short-term training interventions limits possibilities for implementing education and occupational skills programs of longer duration. Another emerging problem is the detailed nature of the competencies being developed by PICs. While these may be needed for curriculum and program implementation purposes, they do not necessarily reflect the generic competencies that should be incorporated into a credential that would facilitate an individual's movement within the labor market, and access to further education and training.

There are three strategic approaches suggested to start moving toward a documentation system to provide useful accreditation of employment and training programs and to contribute to the goal for development of useful credentials. These approaches are: 1) build on the work now occurring within the JTPA system; 2) devise a multi-faceted assessment system with related documentation of achievement; and/or 3) develop an employability profile for employment and training participants. Combining elements of each may prove to be most effective for the employment and training system and its clients. No single accrediting system, nor one model credential is proposed.

There are a number of steps state legislators can take relative to each of the suggested strategical approaches. The intent of suggested actions is not to artificially force what a legislator might do with the strategies, but to provide examples of where a legislator might begin to take some action.

Basic information will be needed on how the Job Training Partnership Act is operating across a legislator's state and within the Service Delivery Area(s) in his/her district. Three basic questions for getting started need to be addressed:

- o How many JTPA dollars go into the public education system (secondary and postsecondary) versus private training systems?

- o How many participants in what kinds of programs are training in the education system versus private training institutions?

- o How are state education, occupations certification and licensing, apprenticeship standards, and the like taken into consideration in planning training programs funded by the Job Training Partnership Act?

The following are suggestions for some actions state legislators might undertake for beginning to work on the three strategic approaches suggested in Section V of the paper.

<u>Build on the Work Now Occurring Within the JTPA System in a State</u>.

1. Request the state agency responsible for administration of JTPA and the State Job Training Coordinating Council to provide an analysis of the program standards and competencies being developed by the individual Private Industry Councils.

2. Convene a task force of representatives from postsecondary institutions, adult education, proprietary training institutions and training departments from major employers to assess what is in place or in planning for documentation strategies at the local level under JTPA.

3. Hold hearings in legislators' electoral districts.

4. Carefully assess the federal employment and training legislation to determine if provisions of JTPA and/or regulations as they are interpreted and implemented present barriers to the direction of any state initiatives.

5. Promote linkages between Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) and credential-granting institutions (traditional and non-traditional credentials) to assist in documentation of program components delivered by credential-granting institutions.

6. Initiate action to require equivalency of educational competencies required in any state secondary testing program and educational competencies in JTPA programs.

Devise a Multi-Faceted Assessment System with Related Documentation of Achievement.

1. Initiate action to undertake a general legislative review of all state procedures for awarding credentials (including JTPA).

2. Request a review of available national assessment tools from national and state groups.

3. Work with national groups to develop new assessment tools.

Develop an Employability Profile for Employment and Training System Participants.

1. Consult with the American Council on Education (ACE) about the Army employability profile.

2. Initiate action to mandate an employability profile for all persons exiting a JTPA program.

Related Policy Recommendations.

1. Require the integration of summer youth programs with school year counseling, remediation and vocational programs to provide comprehensive treatment for at-risk youth and coordination of documentation and record-keeping for these youths.

2. Through state mandate, eliminate the age requirement and/or restrictions based on a youth's graduating class to ease referral for younger drop-outs to adult high school or GED programs.

3. Initiate use of state resources for pilot programs to develop integration of school programs with JTPA in-school youth programs to assist in developing an employability profile for these youths.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Most Americans secure credentials that facilitate their full participation in our economy through completion of programs in traditional diploma or degree-granting institutions. The average citizen receives at least a high school diploma and many go on to secure degrees from community or junior colleges, colleges and universities, or graduate schools. For many persons who have not obtained these credentials, our society and educational institutions have developed well accepted alternative credentials, e.g., the General Equivalency Diploma or GED for high school equivalency, the External High School Diploma, and methods to accredit experience through the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning.

A significant number of persons, particularly the economically disadvantaged, possess no credential or certificate defining their skills and experience. Economically disadvantaged youth and adults, and many workers dislocated from the manufacturing sector of the economy do not possess traditional credentials, and a large number are not in a position to take advantage of alternative credentials. Without a certificate or credential, their initial access to the labor market, ability to move within the labor market, and participation in further education or training are limited.

The federally sponsored employment and training system is the avenue upon which economically disadvantaged youth and dislocated workers increasingly rely for entry into the economic mainstream. Under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the employment and training system never developed a system of credentials for certifying the skills and abilities which its participants developed. The absence of a certificate or credential contributed to the weak reputation of the CETA system among employers.

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is the successor to CETA. JTPA presents a new opportunity to develop a system for assessing and certifying the skills and abilities of its participants. The basic purpose of the Act is:

> to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force and to afford job training to those economically disadvantaged individuals and other individuals facing serious barriers to employment who are in special need of such training to obtain productive employment.

The JTPA legislation creates a new role for state government in the employment and training system. Under CETA, funds were allocated directly from the federal government to local prime sponsors. States had a rather limited role in the system, and little opportunity to pursue state employment policies within the federal legislative framework. In contast, under JTPA, funds flow through the state to the local Service Delivery Areas and the state has new tools to exercise policy direction over the employment and training system. Although JTPA gives the governor the basic power and accountability for management of the employment and training system, state legislators are not precluded from the enactment of state legislation for the implementation assisted by JTPA. (P.L. 97-300, sec. 126). They have an important role to play in linking the employment and training system with education, economic development, and fiscal policies of the state.

JTPA is implemented in Service Delivery Areas at the local level through a partnership between local government and Private Industry Councils (PICs). PICs are mandated by the law to have a majority of private sector members. A key task of the PIC

is to develop employment competencies for youth which reflect the skills needed for employment in the local labor market. The Act also emphasizes the application of precise performance standards to evaluate program outcomes. These provisions are designed to create greater credibility for the employment and training system. The mandate to develop youth competencies and the use of performance standards is especially relevant to the question of accrediting and certifying participant achievement in the system, since such competencies begin to provide criteria for measuring participant performance.

This paper argues that providing credentials for participants in the employment and training system is an issue which merits the attention of state legislators. JTPA offers legislators a handle for addressing the issue in the Act's language stating that:

> . . . standards and procedures with respect to the awarding of academic skills and certifying educational attainment in programs conducted under this title shall be consistent with the requirements of applicable state and local law and regulation. (P.L. 97-300, sec. 141(o)(2)).

State legislatures have been in the forefront on issues concerning the quality and credibility of public education credentials. State legislators can assume an important leadership role in addressing the issue of accrediting or certifying participants' achievement in a state's public employment and training programs.

Five Basic Questions About Accreditation and Certification for Employment and Training Programs.

This paper aims to help state legislators define their role in this issue by answering these questions:

- Why is there a need for a system to accredit and certify the achievement of participants?
- What should be the characteristics of such a system?
- What has the employment and training system been doing to develop a system to accredit or certify participant achievement?
- What methods and strategies are available to use in developing the system?
- What actions can state legislators take toward the creation of this system?

In this paper, a credential for the employment and training system is defined as an award for demonstrating a range of generic competencies in occupational skills, educational attainment, and personal development. Such a credential earned through the public employment and training system would be portable and receive the long term recognition accorded other credentials, e.g., the GED.

Certificates are defined as representing shorter-term and less comprehensive experiences in the employment and training system. They should reflect the attainment of the skills certified. Certificates should also serve as the basis for award of academic credit, and as a prerequisite for more advanced employer training. Ultimately, certificates should build toward a credential awarded through the employment and training system.

SECTION II: WHY DO WE NEED A SYSTEM TO ACCREDIT OR CERTIFY PARTICIPANT ACHIEVEMENT IN THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SYSTEM?

A system to accredit and certify the achievement of participants in employment and training programs is important to participants (youth and adults), employers, the employment and training system and the economy as a whole. This section discusses the need for such a system.

Disadvantaged youth and adults need a method to present their skills and abilities to employers.

One of the major problems for clients in employment and training programs is the lack of a recognized credential generally acceptable to employers and traditional education institutions. Persons who have poor academic records, lack a high school credential, and/or perceive themselves as failures have great difficulty in presenting themselves to prospective employers. To address this problem youth and adults participating in employment and training programs should receive some type of certificate which can: 1) be understood by employers and facilitate entry-level hiring decisions; and 2) be recognized by educational institutions for completion of educational credentials needed for employment and advanced training.

Certificates or credit can also be important motivational tools encouraging individuals to complete a program. Tangible evidence of success offers a sense of accomplishment and can create confidence to attempt next steps in training or education. A participant's perception of self and abilities can also be enhanced by attaining formal recognition of accomplishment.

While the need for an accreditation/certification system exists for both youth and adults, it is particularly critical for the growing number of youth who need help gaining access to the economic mainstream. Minority (racial, ethnic and language) young people are increasing as a percentage of the nation's youth population. These are the young people facing the greatest barriers to employment. Currently, one in every four students who enrolls in ninth grade drops out before high school graduation. (NCES) Dropout rates for black students are just under twice as great as for white students; those for Hispanic students are just over twice as great as for whites. The college attendance rate for minority youth is also dropping. In 1977, 51 percent of all white and 50 percent of all black high school graduates went to college. In 1982, the percent of black high school graduates entering college had fallen to 36 percent. (Young.) Lacking traditional credentials, many of these youth will need some other method to document their skills and abilities for the labor market.

Dislocated adult workers must be able to certify their skills and experience to prospective new employers.

Ninety percent of persons who will be in the work force in the next ten years are currently in the work force. Many of these persons came to maturity and entered the work force assuming that they would stay in a particular job or industry and possibly with the same employer for their working life. But economic realities have resulted in many of these persons becoming displaced workers. The fact is that many adults may face more than one major dislocation in employment and will recurrently face needs for new skills. These persons will need documentation of previous training, applicable skills and their

earlier entry into the work force as a base from which to build new and different employment opportunities. For many of these persons, the public employment and training system will be an increasingly important resource. That system must have tools available to certify the prior experience of dislocated workers and the results of their participation in particular programs.

Changes in state, national, and international economies demand an increasingly flexible work force with credentials.

Many states are running hard simply to maintain their economies, let alone develop growth in their economies. Regional shifts in major industries are well known, along with the fact that business and industry relocate, and new development occurs largely where an existing or potential work force is in place. State policymakers must now be concerned not only with the loss of employers and attracting new employers, but with accelerated change in the needs of existing business and industry and the implications of this change for the work force.

While experts debate the full nature of change in the nation's economy through this century, few dispute that almost all occupations will change and everyone will have to work "smarter." The variable in the economic equation which can be manipulated is the capacity of persons in our work force to adapt to change. People must be able to respond to the need to develop training and education building blocks throughout their working lives. Given the changing economy and labor market need, no credential, diploma, degree, license or certification program can be considered a terminal experience. Existing credentials do, however, give the holder longer-term recognition of acceptable accomplishment which may be used to exercise future options for education, training, and employment. This paper argues that the need to create portable and longer-term credibility for the accomplishments of clients in the employment and training system.

Employers rely on credentials/certificates in the hiring process; documentation of the skills of youth and adults can help them secure employment.

Employers use certificates and credentials to help them make hiring decisions. A September 1983 nationwide survey by the American Council on Education found that 90 percent of the companies responding placed a major or moderate emphasis on educational credentials such as traditional high school diplomas, high school equivalency credentials, or alternative degree program credentials for jobs. (American Council on Education.)

Moreover, even while employers are questioning whether people completing high school possess the competencies needed for the work place, they still place value on the fact that an individual completed school. This derives from the employers' feeling that completion suggests skills needed on the job: an ability to accept directions from authority, attend classes regularly and punctually, and stay with a project to completion. Some employers prefer the GED to a high school diploma because it clearly establishes that GED holders have attained certain basic education levels. (Stoyanoff)

Competency-based certificates, licenses or diplomas also assist employers to assess accurately an applicant's potential to succeed. These certificates are helpful not so much because of the skills they represent but because they suggest motivation, perseverance, generic skills, and in some instances, rudimentary knowledge of the occupation. As an information signal, the certificates can be useful in placing individuals in jobs which match their competencies. (Nelson and Ujakovich.)

Yet, certification schemes are also viewed as too numerous, too varied, and too limited in their information to inform employers about skills underlyng the certificate or the quality of the training program behind it. (Nelson and Ujakovich.) Part of the problem is that certificates do not document many of the qualities employers are looking for in prospective employees: interpersonal skills; good work-related attitudes and behaviors, basic education skills; and the ability to be trained. When hiring for entry-level jobs, employers look at personal characteristics, behavior and past performance to predict which person possesses these basic qualifications and will work best in their organization. These indicators are highly judgmental and do not include the technical skills necessary for a particular job. Thus, employers use existing certificates and credentials for entry-level hiring as "the best available data" even though they do not necessarily reflect key factors of concern to them.

Employers have confirmed the need for some better mechanism for defining the skills and abilities of economically disadvantaged persons, youth in particular. In a project to develop an employability profile (see Section V for a discussion of this documentation mechanism), small and medium size businesses and industries indicated that they still did not know how to select from among inner city youths, since middle class norms could not be used. (Grede, et al.) Notably, small and medium size employers represent the largest number of jobs available nationally and a growing portion of the labor market.

The Career Passport, a tool which summarizes the life experiences of youth in a format useful to employers, illustrates the value of documentation. The Passport is developed by the young person following an assessment process guided by qualified adults. Employers interviewing youths who have a Career Passport have found them more capable in the interview process and better able to describe their ability to perform on the job. Thus, employers were more likely to hire them. (Charner.)

JTPA's major criterion for success is client entry into private sector employment, whether that is immediately after training for adults or into part-time or full-time work for youth in the system. Employers rely heavily on credentials from credible institutions or programs for initial screening for employment. Current questioning of traditional credentials by employers has not diminished this practice. If we look at how employers hire people initially, and beyond, to the next need of clients to find employment, the availability of portable documentation to assist employers in making hiring decisions assumes major importance.

Accreditation/certification for participants in the employment and training system will help the system to achieve needed credibility in the employer community.

General credibility of any system is the first requisite for credibility of its clients' experiences in a unit of that system. Traditional public credential awarding institutions provide credibility for their clients' achievement because the state has established the institutions or put in place a system for accreditation of the range of credentials or units of achievement. In other words, the state established the credibility of the credential or units of achievement. Private vocational schools generally achieve such credibility through the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools. The CETA system had no similar mechanism for achieving institutional credibility nor did it have a comprehensive strategy or mechansim for achieving such credibility.

The second requisite for creating credibility for any institutional system derives from society's experience with persons exiting such institutions. CETA was not able to establish credibility in this regard either, although there is some evidence that the small

number of private employers who utilized its clients were satisfied with performance. Most private employers were not heavily involved with the system, however, and never perceived CETA as a system producing individuals capable of meeting their job requirements.

JTPA is endeavoring to move toward greater credibilty. Increased ownership on the part of employers through the Private Industry Council and state governance of the system, as well as the development of youth competencies and use of performance standards, are key parts of this effort. But this drive toward credibility is occurring at the local level through the many local units of the JTPA system which differ in quality and degree of development. The state role in that process has not yet been fully established. Very little attention has been focused on consistency of competencies and intra-state portability of clients' achievements. The detailed competencies being developed at the local level are an important step, but at this point they do not represent the type of comprehensive accreditation/documentation system needed for a state's employment and training system to be recognized as a mainstream system providing access to the primary labor market.

<u>An alternative certification/credential system is needed by persons in the JTPA system as much as or more than by persons benefiting from currently recognized alternative systems.</u>

The challenge of developing acceptable documentation for employment and training programs is not new. Discussion during CETA years ranged from developing a national credential to establishing minimally agreed upon standards which would be adapted for states and localities through traditional credential granting institutions. It is probably fair to say that the lack of credibility of the CETA system among employers and the general public, and the relative political powerlessness of CETA clients precluded any substantial movement toward a certifying/credential awarding system. These realities were coupled with minimal involvement of state governance systems which generally are empowered to enact laws and regulations setting standards for, granting credentials and licenses through state accredited institutions, systems and programs.

This nation has responded in the past when sizeable and growing groups in our population have had demonstrated need for a new credential or systems for assessing educational attainment and occupationally focused skills: returning GIs and the development of the GED; adults seeking documentation of life skills and educational achievement and the development of the external college degree and the external high school diploma; members of the military and the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS); adults requiring documentation of continuing education and skills development and the Continuing Education Unit (CEU). (See Appendix A for a description of existing methods to award credentials or certify achievement outside the traditional educational system.)

SECTION III: WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT A SYSTEM TO ACCREDIT OR CERTIFY THE SKILLS AND ABILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE?

This paper does not attempt to promote one model system or credential for documenting skills and abilities. There are, however, certain characteristics a documentation system could possess. The system should:

- o be portable among labor markets in a given state or nationally;
- o help employers differentiate qualitatively between different job applicants by allowing for the documentation of a range of competency levels, not just one certification level;
- o serve the information needs of educators for purposes of obtaining educational credit needed for employment and advanced training;
- o incorporate basic education skills and pre-employment/work maturity competencies and occupational skill attainment or aptitude;
- o be based on assessment processes that are valid measures of on-the-job performance requirements;
- o enable the individual to understand his/her own skills and abilities and communicate them to an employer;
- o be packaged particularly with a view to the needs of medium- and small-size employers who typically do not have sophisticated assessment methods, but useful to the large size employers as well; and
- o avoid requiring unrealistic financial investment in hardware, facilities or staff to implement the necessary assessment process. (Adapted from Ganzglass)

These are characteristics against which state legislators can review efforts to create a system for certification or development of an employment and training credential in a JTPA Service Delivery Area or statewide.

SECTION IV: WHAT IS THE STATUS OF EFFORTS OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO CREATE A METHOD TO PROVIDE A CREDENTIAL OR CERTIFY AN INDIVIDUAL'S PARTICIPATION?

While the employment and training system has not established a mechanism to document skills and experience developed by its clients, there were several initiatives under CETA which set the stage for what is now occurring under JTPA.

Initiatives under CETA.

The Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) of 1977, a special youth initiative within the framework of CETA, encouraged arrangements "whereby academic credit may be awarded, consistent with state law, by educational institutions and agencies for competencies derived from work experience derived through programs established under this title." The objective was to have the education community recognize that learning was taking place within CETA-funded "nontraditional," experiential programs and that these programs did have educational value which could be quantified in terms of educational credit. The acquisition of this credit would presumably serve to motivate the youthful CETA participant to either remain in school or return to school or an alternative educational program. (Ganzglass)

Problems sometimes occurred in obtaining credit for CETA work experience programs. CETA programs often were not structured or staffed in ways that were consistent with education's method of evaluating programs for credit. Educational credit at the secondary and postsecondary levels has traditionally been closely tied to the content of educational programming, the presumption being that the program/curriculum is the controlling force in obtaining desired educational outcomes. Because of the nontraditional structure and staffing of CETA programs in contrast to education, problems and turf battles arose relative to granting academic credit. Despite these conflicts, CETA's academic provisions did result in the availability of academic credit for many CETA sponsored programs, particularly for those operated by the public school systems. In Fiscal Year 1981, 80,000 in-school participants obtained credit.

With the shift to JTPA, funds explicitly for in-school programs are no longer available and the focus has moved from academic credit to the attainment of competencies. What the relationship between attainment of competencies and receipt of academic credit will be remains to be seen. The competencies themselves are still being developed and implemented at the local level. Educational institutions, especially community colleges, have become the single major provider of training services under JTPA. The potential for academic credit remains. Whether and how these developments can be incorporated into a broader system of providing credentials and certification remains to be seen.

The most extensive competency-based assessment system in the federal employment and training system which could form the basis for a certification system has been created by a nationally managed program, Job Corps. Competency-based programs are offered in all Job Corps Centers and a significant number of centers operate entirely on a competency-based system. That system includes curriculum assessment, participant tracking and documentation/certification tools.

Prior to JTPA, local employment and training programs gave limited attention to competency-based programming until the Office of Youth Programs, U.S. Department of Labor funded the Consolidated Youth Employment Program. That program encountered

many problems. Thirteen sophisticated CETA prime sponsors had great difficulty in identifying competency areas and setting standards against which individualized progress of participants could be measured, even when the prime sponsors worked closely with employers. Few had access to competency-based assessment and curriculum materials and most lacked technical expertise in this field. Most of the participating prime sponsors floundered in trying to arrive at competency statements, relevant indicators for these competencies and appropriate assessment tools. Prime sponsors experienced particular difficulty in developing standards for occupational skills because of the diversity of employer expectation (TATC). While this and other efforts were less successful than might have been hoped, they served as a basis for the work now occurring under JTPA.

Private Industry Councils under JTPA are developing youth competencies.

The latest approach to competency-based programs under JTPA has Private Industry Councils (PICs) in Service Delivery Areas around the country developing youth employment competencies. Notably, the Act calls for competencies to be developed locally. Nearly all of the 594 SDAs are now developing competencies, generally in three categories:

- o Pre-Employment/Work Maturity: Skills related to selecting a career and finding a job, as well as the personal skills to function effectively on the job.

- o Basic Education: Reading, writing and comprehension skills and the ability to apply thinking skills and understanding of basic concepts in the work environment.

- o Job Specific: Demonstrated knowledge and skills to perform entry-level tasks in particular occupations or an occupational cluster.

The competencies, which must be approved by the PIC, are to reflect the needs of the private business sector. Successful achievement of some of these competencies would serve as a bridge to employment for the individuals.

According to a recent survey by the National Alliance of Business in conjunction with the National Governors' Association, nearly all JTPA Service Delivery Areas have started the youth competency process. Of the three categories noted above, pre-employment/work maturity competencies are the most well developed. This reflects the fact that the employment and training system traditionally has placed great emphasis on this set of skills. The JTPA system continues this emphasis, focusing on assisting youth who are most job ready to acquire skills needed to quickly gain access to the labor market. The development of basic education and job specific competencies is moving far more slowly, due in part to the minimal resources in the system for providing training in these two areas.

General indications from the JTPA system suggest that PICs are moving at the micro level to create often lengthy lists of competencies for skills training and employability development. The operational assumption is that JTPA clients will demonstrate these competencies sufficiently in the work place to create credibility for succeeding individuals coming through programs of the system.

From the perspective of building a more broadly useful credential or certificate, this level of detail may pose problems. The dictionary definition of competence suggests that a competence or aspect of competence cannot be measured directly, but can only be induced from the analysis of demonstrated behavior. An analogy can be drawn

between a competency and a tool, both of which may be used to operate in different situations with different results. The nature of the tool is seldom evident in the finished product, so too the generic nature of the competency is seldom evident from observed behavior. Therefore, to define competencies as lists of specific repeated skills, tasks and actions and to incorporate them in a documentation scheme that has integrity is to confuse tested outcomes with the learned processes that enable competencies to occur over time in different settings. (Klemp) If clients in the employment and training system are to benefit in the longer term from their experiences in the system, it is important that their accomplishments be presented in a finite list of generic competencies, which will enable them to move effectively within the labor market and secure additional education and training.

Greater detail may be needed for the development of curriculum for a training program, but not in the documentation of the achievement of that individual. Employers may be interested in ascertaining the content of the curriculum for a particular program -- -indeed, they should be involved in developing that curriculum -- but a document that individuals can present to employers and education/training programs should describe a broader set of competencies.

Methods to develop credentials/certify client participation are developing on a limited ad hoc basis within local Service Delivery Areas under JTPA.

The NAB/NGA survey also asked about client certification and credential development activities. Twenty-one percent of the SDAs have some type of system in place while 17 percent are implementing a certification system and 42 percent are in the planning stage. The survey did not describe certifications/credentials that were being provided or in the process of development. Generally, it appears that simple certificates indicating that an individual has achieved pre-employment/work maturity competencies are being issued by PICs.

There is little evidence of efforts to achieve comparability of competencies among PICs.

State JTPA agencies responding to the issue in the NAB/NGA survey were state JTPA offices who "have just begun thinking about the issue of comparability." States have tended not to place limitations on the SDAs in the competency development process to date. More state involvement seems likely to emerge to consider the question of comparability. Overall, the character of the credential/certification mechanism emerging from the competency development process now occurring in the JTPA system is still being shaped. The nature of that mechanism can still be influenced to ensure that it reflects the key characteristics of portabilty, value to employer, and linkage to further education and training.

The JTPA system is not giving priority to persons in the population most in need of credentials or certificates for employers.

Two interrelated developments have occurred in the JTPA system which have implications for the credential/certification mechanism being suggested: shifts in characteristics of the client population traditionally served by the employment and training system; and the scope of the education and training services being offered.

The employment and training system has typically endeavored to meet the needs of the most hard to serve populations. For these at-risk populations, the public employment and training programs historically have been the only structured experience which could open possibilities for entry into the economic mainstream. Research to date on the client

population in programs under JTPA indicates a shift away from these most at-risk populations. Indeed, the educational level of enrollees in JTPA programs has never been higher. A recent study of early JTPA implementation indicates that local JTPA partners (government and private sector) are "in basic agreement about the inherent targeting philosophy of the act -- that it does not offer significant incentives or resources to aim at those most in need." This reflects itself at the local level in a focus aiming at older, "more job ready youth" and de-emphasizing "higher risk" youth. "This priority generally arose not from an analysis of local needs or policy goals, but from a perception of what could be achieved under the Act." (Walker) Research also indicated a major swing to traditional institutions as training providers -- a move away from using agencies and organizations which have, in the past, provided access to and training/services for the most economically and educationally disadvantaged.

A second key issue in the JTPA system is the duration of an individual's stay in a particular program. Whether it is a result of the legislation itself, performance standards established by the U.S. Department of Labor, the posture of a local PIC or other factors, JTPA in its implementation encourages the shortest possible programs which can result in placement in employment or develop minimal employment competencies. There is much experience with youth to suggest that the wide gulf separating those who successfully enter employment through their own effort and those for whom the employment and training system is the "last best hope" is the result of differences in economic class and educational achievement. These represent long-term advantages and achievement gained over time, and short-term interventions seem unlikely to bridge this gap. The question is whether greater credibility and longer-term gains for high-risk youth can be achieved from short term interventions, no matter how long a list of specific competencies may be established. If JTPA is not serving high risk persons, especially youth, then who is? Perhaps to help youth achieve needed competencies, state policymakers should consider providing additional resources, developing institutional linkages to provide longer-term interventions, integrating employment and training programs for in-school youth with secondary education or establishing responsibility for younger dropouts within the elementary-secondary system.

If this trend in population served, institutions providing training and the length of training continues, the issue of developing accreditation for employment and training programs may become moot since the historic clientele of the employment and training system will not be the focus of services of the system. The challenge of developing certification/documentation or "credentialing" systems is far different if training and services are focused on populations with relatively few barriers to employment and delivered by established institutions which are part of recognized systems for accrediting programs and courses.

However, persons who turn to the employment and training system are still generally persons for whom traditional educational experiences, or possibly prior employment are not translating into successful entry into the work force. With the exception of dislocated skilled workers, the average JTPA client is isolated from the mainstream by his/her economic and educational disadvantage. Frequently, this is compounded by racial, ethnic or language isolation. The issue of accreditation/certification and longer-term portable documentation of generic occupational, employability and educational competencies is still a challenging employment and training policy issue for this population. It is even more difficult, however, for dropout youths, as well as for adults who have not completed high school, and face multiple barriers to employment.

SECTION V: WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGICAL APPROACHES TO MOVE TOWARD A CERTIFICATION/CREDENTIAL MECHANISM IN THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SYSTEM?

Comprehensive certification/credential granting systems for clients in the employment and training system pose a complex challenge. The development and acceptance of such systems, even where there is leadership and commitment to act, will be some time in coming in most states. There are, however, some strategical approaches which can begin the process.

Three strategical approaches are suggested as possible starting points: 1) build on the work now occurring within the JTPA system; 2) devise a multi-faceted assessment system with related documentation of achievement; and/or 3) develop an employability profile for employment and training system participants. These approaches are not mutually exclusive; in fact, combining these approaches may offer the greatest potential for moving toward an effective and appropriate system.

States can build on emerging competency systems under JTPA to create a more comprehensive system to certify and develop credentials for the system.

The elements of a competency assessment and documentation system are now being developed in nearly 600 JTPA Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) across the country. Each SDA is creating its own set of competencies for addressing pre-employment/work maturity skills, basic education skills, and occupation specific skills. While competencies are being exchanged among various networks, the process is essentially a local one, utilizing local skills and expertise. No national resource presently has responsibility for analyzing and drawing together these emerging systems. To date, states have given the issue limited attention. At this time, only one component of the youth competencies, pre-employment/work maturity skills, is well-developed and there is limited experience with its application. While there may be problems in the level of detail at which these competencies are being developed, a major investment is being made in the process. Certification devices are also being developed.

In the next several years as the JTPA system matures, competency assessment and certification/credentialing mechanisms will also mature. One strategy which states might pursue would be to sort out similarities among emerging competency systems, modify various elements as needed with local involvement, and design a set of certificates and/or a credential that is portable, responsive to employers, and linked to further education. These would be portable across an entire state while still possibly retaining some uniquely local elements. This approach would draw upon the state's traditional role in establishing education regulations and standards and awarding of credentials and certificates as well as its systems management responsibilities within JTPA.

State action in this sorting out process need not await substantially greater movement by SDAs to make an operational system in all three competency areas. In fact, the more developed local systems become, the more difficult it is likely to be to incorporate them into a statewide system that assures consistency for purposes of granting credit and/or giving a certificate that responds to the broader needs of the labor markets of a state.

A multi-faceted assessment and certification system can be devised.

Types of Assessments Instruments.

Leaving aside the JTPA competency structure, various tools have been developed over the years to assess employment competencies in pre-employment/work maturity, basic education and occupational skills and aptitudes. The development of other tools has occurred on a preliminary basis, and still other assessment methods or tests have been proposed. Work to adapt a series of available instruments or create new ones could form the basis of a system to assess and certify an individual's skills and abilities.

The status of development of assessment instruments varies in terms of each of the competency categories. Assessment techniques have been most thoroughly tested and recognized in the occupational skills area. For example, the U. S. Employment Service's General Aptitude Test Battery and the Armed Services' Vocational Aptitude Battery are vocational aptitude tests that have been used for many years. In addition, techniques to test occupational competencies have been developed extensively in the vocational educational community. Measures for specific occupations have also been developed by the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) and the American Institutes for Research. Competency-based curricula have been developed by several states and multi-state organizations.

In the Basic Education category, problems exist with available tests. The tests are normally focused on measuring academic attainment, rather than job-related education skills. The Adult Performance Level Test has such a focus. The Employment Service's Basic Occupational Literacy Test is also available but its value is limited because it does not adequately distinguish skilled from unskilled persons. (U.S.E.S.)

Officials of the American Council on Education have suggested the development of a Pre-GED examination potentially geared to the 8th or 9th grade level of academic achievement. The test would be developed and validated at the national level and disseminated through the existing GED network which includes 3,000 testing centers across the country. The fact that this test comes from the same institutional source as the GED would help to give it the credibility needed within the employer and educational communities.

Some have suggested the use of assessment techniques other than paper and pencil tests for basic education skills or job literacy would be more appropriate. Proposals include:

- o A system for assessing reading and comprehension skills by having a person fill in blanks with appropriate words within a job-related text from which words have been systematically deleted;
- o Assessment based on participants' observed oral discussion of job reading materials; and
- o Comprehension and vocabulary tests locally constructed form job reading materials. (Miluecky)

While measures of pre-employment/work maturity skills are the most well-developed component of the three competency categories, formal assessment tools for pre-employment/work maturity are not well developed. If a set of assessment tools could be developed and recognized for measuring occupational skills, academic achievement and

pre-employment/work maturity skills, these tools would serve as the base for a new credentialing system. Such a system also would provide a basis for strengthening the JTPA competency system. The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Youth Programs had a paper and pencil test that included categories such as job knowledge, work relevant attitudes and job seeking skills. Behavioral observation techniques have been created as well, but overall the most work remains to be done in this area. The experience of the Private Industry Councils under JTPA should be on important resource for the development of such an assessment tool.

National expertise to develop an assessment system.

The expertise and resources to adapt and/or develop the types of assessment tools that have just been described are at the national level. The JTPA system is operating locally with limited national technical support. If there are to be assessment tools that will be widely accepted for the purpose of documenting employment and training programs, it is arguable that these should be developed at the national level. Alternatively, such a developmental effort could be undertaken by a consortium of states drawing upon nationally recognized expertise and resources.

An employability profile could be designed for use in the employment and training system and even more widely.

An employability profile would present the skills and abilities of individuals in a manner designed to enable the individual to build the profile as he/she moves through other jobs and additional education training, and present those skills and abilities to prospective employers. The profile might express the skills and abilities of the individuals developed from their life experiences, work experiences and education and training. It could reflect the competencies achieved under JTPA and the result of the assessment tools referenced above.

The American Council on Education (ACE) is now working with the Army to develop a profile of this type for education and experience gained in the Army: The Army/ACE Registry Transcript System (AARTS). AARTS will be an automated system designed to provide active duty enlisted personnel and separating enlisted personnel and veterans with a transcript showing military training and selected educational experiences completed while on active duty. Transcripts will contain military courses completed, Skills Qualification Test results, military occupational specialties held; and college level standardized test results. College credit recommendations developed by the American Council on Education will be included. Upon implementation, transcripts will be printed as requested by the soldier and issued automatically during pre-separation counseling.

The AARTS transcript is a vehicle for translating the experience and skills developed through completion of courses and work experience in the military into an analytic tool that can be of help to an individual in the short and long term. AARTS transcripts may be used by college registrars to award credit, by potential employers to hire veterans, and by Army Education Centers for counseling purposes.

The experience of the Career Passport Program, the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning, JTPA youth competencies, as well as AARTS and other programs could be utilized in the development of an employability profile. If such a profile system were created and accepted, it could be the "resume" needed in the longer term for many people seeking entry into education programs or responding to radical shifts in the labor market.

SECTION VI: WHAT ACTIONS CAN STATE LEGISLATORS TAKE?

State legislators can play a powerful role in shaping the development of states' employment and training systems. State legislative actions already empower systems and institutions to issue diplomas, licenses and degrees. In addition, certification and licensing of individuals in systems, institutions and private schools subject to state authority are controlled by legislative action. State legislators are in a position to exercise leadership needed to develop and implement a state system of certificates and credentials for participants in public employment and training programs.

There are a number of steps state legislators can take relative to each of the suggested strategical approaches. The intent of suggested actions is not to artificially force what a legislator might do with the strategies, but to provide some examples of where a legislator might begin to take some action.

General Information

Basic information will be needed on how the Job Training Partnership Act is operating across a legislator's state and within the Service Delivery Area(s) in his/her district. Three basic questions for getting started need to be addressed:

- How many JTPA dollars go into the public education system (secondary and postsecondary) versus private training systems?
- How many participants in what kinds of programs are training in the education system versus private training institutions?
- How are state education, occupations certification and licensing, apprenticeship standards, and the like taken into consideration in planning training programs funded by the Job Training Partnership Act?

At the local level, answers to these questions will most likely be available from the JTPA administrative entity, the Private Industry Council or local community college. Sources of information at the state level include state employment and training administrators, state boards of education, state advisory councils on vocational education, boards for apprenticeships and licensing, and numerous professional and trade associations. Many of these sources also have analogous units on the local level. A key factor in the basic "getting started" information collection process will be to identify the various political interest groups affected by and likely to affect legislative initiatives around the issue of employment and training credentials.

Steps Relative to the Proposed Strategic Approaches

The process of developing a comprehensive credential or an accrediting system like the GED or that being developed for military personnel will require considerable time and negotiation among all interested parties. The strategies suggested in Section V for beginning to work toward such a system will, themselves, require considerable maneuvering among interests within the public employment and training system and among the various interest groups and established institutions concerned with credentials for education and training. There are, however, places to begin and statutory responsibilities and authority which give legitimacy to legislators' initiatives. Resources will be critical to the pursuit of any of the strategies that have been proposed here. State legislatures could leverage the use of various funding sources (e.g., JTPA 8% set-aside funds for

educational linkages, federal vocational education monies available for state education agency use, etc.) to support research and development for possible state initiatives. Through legislative initiative, general revenue funds could be appropriated through higher education and elementary-secondary education to leverage or match other funds available to the state to support research and development for a multi-faceted approach to an assessment system.

The following are suggestions for some actions state legislators might undertake for beginning to work on the three strategical approaches suggested in Section V.

Build on the Work Now Occurring Within the JTPA System in a State.

1. Request the state agency responsible for administration of JTPA and the State Job Training Coordinating Council to provide an analysis of the program standards and competencies being developed by the individual Private Industry Councils.

   Through legislative staff work and/or other available expertise, develop a clear picture of commonalities among individual units of the JTPA system, breadth of involvement of employers in a state's major industries, extent and nature of involvement of local school systems and post-secondary institutions, and any developing accrediting methods at the local level which may have potential for statewide strategies.

2. Convene a task force of representatives from postsecondary institutions, adult education, proprietary training institutions and training departments from major employers to assess what is in place or in planning for documentation strategies at the local level under JTPA.

   Charge the task force to look specifically at what exists in terms of methods and standards which might be built upon for developing credentials and certification.

3. Hold hearings in legislators' electoral districts.

   Invite current and past clients in employment and training programs, members of the Private Industry Council(s) serving a district, employers not involved with PICs, school systems, community colleges and other postsecondary institutions to discuss clients' experiences, the documentation issue and assess needs and possibilities around the accrediting issue.

4. Carefully assess the federal employment and training legislation to determine if provisions of JTPA and/or regulations as they are interpreted and implemented present barriers to the direction of any state initiatives.

   Generally, JTPA rewards short turnaround in training programs with the determinations of success being the first placement after client completion of a program. Educational services are minimized in importance and JTPA resources do not allow longer-term interventions, nor anything but short-term follow-up on clients. National assessments of the development of youth competencies indicate an emphasis on short-term rather than longer-term generic competencies. Legislators from several states could be effective in working together for changes important to the longer-term accreditation issue. Steps relative to the national legislation should be coordinated efforts with all players in the JTPA governance and oversight structures. These action steps can also

help legislators learn more about methods now being utilized to assess individual achievement and what approaches a state could take toward an employability profile.

5. Promote linkages between Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) and credential granting institutions (traditional and non-traditional credentials) to assist in documentation of program components delivered by credential-granting institutions.

   The purpose of this suggested initiative is to achieve mutual recognition, at least among institutions in an SDA, for training delivered through traditional institutions. Draw on national organizations such as the National Conference of State Legislatures, National Alliance of Business, American Council on Education, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, National Governors' Association, etc., as resources along with in-state agencies and organizations concerned with academic standards and credentials to inform and assist institutions with concrete action.

6. Initiative action to require equivalency of educational competencies in any state secondary testing program and educational competencies in JTPA programs.

   This action would be a useful first step in establishing the credibility of JTPA education services and in integrating the education system and employment and training system.

Devise a Multi-Faceted Assessment System with Related Documentation of Achievement.

1. Initiate action to undertake a general legislative review of all state procedures for awarding credentials (including JTPA).

   Information about the various tools and methods for assessing performance or achievement relative to various credentials lies in many different laws, regulations and institutional policies. A general review would bring all information together as a starting point. Including JTPA in such a review affords a beginning toward recognition of the legitimacy of the employment and training system as a member of the education and training systems of a state. By examining methods of assessing performance and achievement, legislators will have a basis for considering alternative assessment systems.

2. Request a review of available national assessment tools from national and state groups.

   National organizations such as the American Council on Education, the National Alliance of Business, the Educational Testing Service or the U.S. Employment Service can provide a review of various assessment tools now being utilized across the country. The Task Force and hearings referenced above relative to competency system under JTPA could also provide information about assessment tools being used in the state.

3. Work with national groups to develop new assessment tools.

   The American Council on Education has suggested the development of a pre-GED test of academic skills and achievement. Existing national tests could also be further developed or new ones created. State legislatures could support the development of such assessment tools. Standards for passing such tests would, of course, be set by the states.

Develop an Employability Profile for Employment and Training System Participants.

1. Consult with the American Council on Education (ACE) concerning Army employability profile.

   The ACE experience in developing the Army employability profile is a valuable resource to state legislators considering the use of an employability profile within a state's employment and training system.

2. Initiate action to mandate an employability profile for all persons exiting a JTPA program.

   The mandating of employability profiles with uniform statewide guidelines, given lead time and some developmental resources from the state, would be a major step toward a more comprehensive and portable credential for employment and training clients.

Related Policy Recommendations.

The character of services to youth under JTPA raises a variety of issues for state legislators concerned with youth in general and high-risk youth in particular.

1. Require the integration of summer youth programs with school year counseling, remediation and vocational programs to provide comprehensive treatment for at--risk youth and coordination of documentation and record-keeping for these youths.

   Start with urban school jurisdictions where there may be legislative initiatives for educational improvements. School systems would have primary responsibility for comprehensive records which would include the assessments of all facets of a youth's experiences in the employment and training system and the education system.

2. Through state mandate, eliminate the age requirement and/or restrictions based on a youth's graduating class to ease referral for younger drop-outs to adult high school or GED programs.

   Demonstrated educational achievement is critical for longer-term success of youthful clients who exit employment and training programs. A comprehensive assessment mechanism strengthens client achievements in education as well as in specific training for employability. Ease of referral is essential to this process of documentation.

3. Initiate use of state resources for pilot programs to develop integration of school programs with JTPA in-school youth programs to assist in developing an employability profile for these youths.

   It is important to bring together an assessment of the skills, competencies and experiences of younger, in-school youth in one document which can be presented to employers and which these younger youths can use as a base for documenting subsequent education and training.

APPENDIX A: METHODS TO CERTIFY OR CREDENTIAL ACHIEVEMENT OUTSIDE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

NON-INSTITUTIONALLY BASED EDUCATION CREDENTIALS

There are numerous methods for documenting accomplishment or certifying people other than the traditional high schol diploma or higher education degree. Recent years have seen tremendous growth in the use and acceptance of these tools within the education community as well as among employers.

General Equivalency Diploma (GED): The GED tests whether a person has the skills and knowledge generally associated with four years of high school instruction. The GED grew out of the High Schol Equivalency Program which was developed to help World War II veterans who were not high school graduates obtain their high schol diplomas. Nearly 3,000 official testing centers administer the GED today through states under the technical guidance and oversight of the American Council on Education. The GED is almost always accepted by community colleges, four year colleges, universities, employers and the military. The importance of the GED is evidenced by the fact that approximately 475,000 persons passed the test in 1983 in the United States and its territories with an average age between 24 and 25 years old. (1983 GED Statistical Review)

External High School Diplomas: Eight states now grant External High School Diplomas. New York represents the model for this program in which a diploma is awarded by an accredited high school on the basis of a competency-based assessment system. Local citizens identify and assess competencies in general and individualized competency areas, based on locally developed standards of performance. Basic skills along with either occupational/vocational, advanced economic or specialized skills are addressed.

Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL): The Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning manages a system whereby secondary or post-secondary academic credit is granted based on review and assessment by faculty members of a portfolio of documented evidence of prior learning. The process was developed to respond primarily to the situation of adults returning to school after considerable time out of school. However, the process is applicable to out of school youth who may have sufficient prior experience resulting from learning activities. More recently the CAEL process has been used to assess displaced workers in the automobile industry.

Continuing Education Units: Credit for participation in courses that are not part of a formal degree program is granted by many institutions in the form of the Continuing Education Unit (CEU). The CEU was created in response to a demand for short-term educational programs to improve the skills of persons in their existing jobs or to help an individual prepare for a job change. In many instances, the CEU can be translated into credits under a degree granting program.

CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

There are a number of well-established mechanisms other than traditional degrees or nontraditional institution-based mechanisms for formally documenting or certifying the skills of individuals. These mechanisms generally address specific occupational areas.

School Certificates: School certificates are granted by public or privately supported schools. The private schools can be nonprofit or profit-making (proprietary). The certificate generally indicates that the student has succesfully completed a number of specific tests.

Proprietary schools pay particular attention to linking the needs of employers and students. Students are often those who have been less successful in non-academic settings. The value of certificates, whether from proprietary schools or others, is in the reputation of the institutions. The name of a local institution that trains the best secretaries, mechanics or computer programmers is well-known to employers throughout the community. Where the school has national recognition, the certificate has value — is portable — to other parts of the country.

Apprenticeship Certificates: Apprenticeship certificates are granted to persons completing programs approved by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, or by industry-union negotiated programs for preparing journeymen. Although the apprenticeship certificate is only documentation of having completed an apprenticeship program, apprenticeship programs have the reputation for producing skilled workers and this credibility makes the apprenticeship certificate one of the most valuable tools for access to the organized labor market throughout the country.

Licenses: All states require licenses for barbers, cosmetologists, embalmers, dental hygienists, practical nurses and airplane mechanics. Other occupations are licensed in different states. Generally, states license occupations to protect consumers from unqualified practitioners of a particular trade or in response to a request from organizations seeking to enhance the reputation of the field, or, as is sometimes the case, to limit access to the field. To receive a license, states usually require that individuals have a certain amount of experience or formal training and pass an examination.

Voluntary Certificates: Voluntary certificates are typically issued by a professional association, e.g., National Registry of Emergency Technicians or independent industry-oriented organizations, e.g., Institute for Automotive Service Excellence to provide nongovernmental recognition of occupational competencies. These certificates are not licenses since they are not necessary for access to the field. On the other hand, given a choice between an employee who has such a certificate or someone who does not, it is easy to determine who will be chosen. Voluntary certificates, like licenses, usually require experience or formal training and an examination.

Military Certificates: The military gives occupational certificates to persons in 350 separate military occupational specialties (MOS) who receive formal training and pass performance or written tests. These specialties cover all military services with some variation. The Army has also established fundamental literacy requirements relative to each MOS; functional literacy training is conducted as part of basic training. In addition, the Army has conducted task analyses of selected MOS and is delivering competency-based training programs and assessment strategies related to job requirements.

The American Council on Education (ACE) is now working with the Army to develop the Army/ACE Registry Transcript System (AARTS), an automated system designed to provide active duty enlisted personnel, separating enlisted personnel and veterans, with a transcript showing military training and selected educational experiences completed while on active duty.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

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